

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1017

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Requesting the Governor, Legislature, and South Dakota Congressional Delegation to support the Healthy Forests Initiative and its individual programs.

WHEREAS, the United States Departments of Agriculture and Interior estimates that, nationwide, 190 million acres of federally owned forest land face a forest health and wildfire risk crisis situation; and

WHEREAS, since the summer of 2000 over 280,000 acres of the Black Hills National Forest were either scorched by wildfire or seriously infested by forest insects; and

WHEREAS, two major wildfires in 2002 resulted in the loss of twenty-five structures in the Black Hills National Forest and threatened to consume the towns of Deadwood, Lead, Harney, Keystone, and Rockerville; and

WHEREAS, in a June 2002 report entitled "The Process Predicament" the United States Forest Service cited itself as being so busy meeting procedural requirements that the Forest Service has trouble fulfilling its historic mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Service's inability to promptly and efficiently implement forest management projects has contributed to wildfire risks and the spread of insect and disease epidemics on the Black Hills National Forest; and

WHEREAS, the United States Departments of Agriculture and Interior have proposed the Healthy Forests Initiative, which includes several proposals to streamline and improve analyses, decision making, and implementation of federal land management projects and programs; and

WHEREAS, these initiatives include: categorical exclusions to accelerate unexpected and imperative fuels, fire rehabilitation, and small timber sale projects; reforming the administrative appeals process; and revising the regulations for forest planning; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of South Dakota would benefit from increased levels of forest management that would help reduce the risks of wildfires and insect epidemics on the Black Hills National Forest:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-eighth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the South Dakota Legislature supports the Healthy Forests Initiative and its individual proposals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Legislature urges the Governor and South Dakota Congressional Delegation to fully support the Healthy Forests Initiative and its individual proposals.

Adopted by the House of Representatives,
Concurred in by the Senate,

March 04, 2003
March 06, 2003

Matthew Michels
Speaker of the House

Karen Gerdes
Chief Clerk of the House

Dennis Daugaard
President of the Senate

Patricia Adam
Secretary of the Senate